9 JULY 1961

"Cock Robin"

A treatment of Abelard in one act, by John Dog.

~~The action of the play takes place at an indifferent time in an indifferent place, at an indifferent time in the Institute of Procedural Justice of an indifferent place, urban or rural.~~

All the viewer need know of history is that Peter Abelard, a great university professor of the middle ages, had a love affair with a young girl he was tutoring named Heloise, and for revenge was castrated by her kinsmen. These are some thoughts about this.

The cast:

ELLIE, a girl
APPLEYARD, a prisoner
QUIRT, his valet
MR. WOOD, head of the institution
OGO and
PLUD, brothers of ELLIE
HEATHKIT and
PARAMETER, attendants

The action of the play takes place at the Institute of Procedural Justification, a building in a somewhat obscure place, urban or rural.
The time is indifferent.

Cock ROBIN: Notes draft, 9 July 61.

LEADING DECISIONS m etc.

SYMBOLISM.

Life's surprises & accidents (HOW SHE FUCKS)
Dark volitions (ditto)
Having to wait out the consequences.

The original plot-card (dated 00247):
Great plot. Play? "Lover in The Pear-Shaped Cage."
2 brothers and a siter in a setting conducive to arrogance and pride. Old Spain? USA today-- family corporation? Certainly could make it a comedy, in some ways.
SHE is proud and attractive, powerful and reserved.
EVERY NOW AND THEN she goes sexually wild with ~~xxx~~ some guy who didn't expect it at all.
The two brothers-- though she tries not to let the episode be known-- invariably capture and imprison the lover. When it is clear she is not pregnant, they shoot him.
Because she doesn't pick men of her own class-- and because she is aloof from men generally-- they will not be suspected.
IF she were pregnant, the brothers would have him marry her. IF not, to avoid it becoming known, he is shot.
IF he is married they hold back, for he would not reveal; and a stooge could be found if she were pregnant.
THE PRISONERS WANT TO MARRY HER, some of them. Brothers do not permit her to know of it-- or keep her from realization she could save him.
...
I see a short musical, like Dreigroschenoper. Where big scene is in the basement dungeon. Guy is in cage shaped like inverted pear. In one scene guy shoots him. Dialogue:
"At least give me a fair chance in a duel. It is only honorable." / "Honor does not lie in formalities. Honor directs me to shoot you." BANG

(another plot-card, 00359.)
N PLOT OF COCK ROBIN
Abelard (Pete Appleyard) talks his way out of death, is given choice between castration and lobotomy, takes the former only after allowing himself to be persuaded by thugs & craftym young man /men that this is the more honorable, intellectual course. And N.B. FOR SURROUNDING NOVEL & MY OTHER STUFF. He thinks he is shrewd in taking this far; in this maintained hybris he is suffering the last indignity, for he is allowing himself to lose his commitment to no mutilation, and acquiring new motivation unsuited to his old self.

(Card 00397)
Some despotic trial.
A burly executioner eats watermelon or apples, and, when each charge is read, spits a pit or throws a core into a certain satchel.
Your relative is asked if he can lift it. If he can, you get option of paying fine.

~~Mexicxeen~~
(Card 00400)
He is confronted with, and constantly reiterates, choice of death or castration in the event of bad luck. This can be a source of humor as he asks, "Which do you think is manlier?" etc.

(fraction of a card 00398.)
CHIEF IS SMART & ACCOMODATING.
Brothers wanted to cook Appleyard's goose, but somebody else-- who? made the decision.

(Up curtain. The scene is a curious chamber: a glass case of surgical instruments, something like a barber chair, and a long counter with a typewriter and tall faucets. But most important is a pear-shaped cage, six feet tall with the narrow end pointed down, that is suspended above the stage. It is constructed to hold one person in a standing position; the prisoner may stand only uncomfortably, and if he shifts position, he will tilt the cage. He may sort of lie against the side, which will tilt the cage to 65°. At the back is a squarish opening for excretion, below which dangles a kitchen pot with a loop handle. There is currently a prisoner in it, Appleyard, but he is scrunched in the bottom of it with chin on his knees, and will not be recognizable until pointed out.
Behind the counter stands Mr. Welkin, the head of the institution. He is reading a Sunday supplement. Near the side of the stage, as though he has just entered, stands Quirt, Appleyard's valet, with a doctor's bag or carpet-bag in his hand.)

W Who is without?
V An squerry with an inquiry.
V Is this the Institute of Procedural Justifcation?

W Behold, he is withup.
V My lord!

W Place it there. He will get it.

A Before this they put me in a barred filing cabinet.

[illegible]

[illegible]

W Sluice for draining eyeballs, funnel for swallowing our long hot draughts of medicine; needles and syringesx of every length.

V or A Is this not an institution for research and elevation, culture and affection?

W That's what it says on the plaque outside; but this is how we run it.

[illegible]

O We don't care who youse had onct, youse is here now.

(SCENE WITH BROTHERS) (AND HEAD OFINSTITUTION) (AND ELLIE, C with cheroot.)

W After torture we would have to kill youk because of Public Opinion. We would not want it known that we tortured people.

(A scream offstage.)

W Excuse me. I must see to some paperwork.

W It would be unquthorized.
A Then it cannot occur!
W Hardly. Unauthorized merely means-- upsuperrvised.
(Don't worry, we have sterile instruments.)

[illegible]

Shall milady whelp, or no?

(One brother talks wistfully with prisoner about how it Must Have Been Great.
A: 'You don't get time to really enjoy it.')

(Revelation of her nympho background.)

E. You made me bleed before. If I bleed again, we bleed together.
(Brothers poo-poo her having been a virgin.)
O. You know perfectly well we got to go through this every time.
Ex E Can't you let me love or marry as I will?
P We got family pride.
O. You marry, you get all the money.
Besides, we don t want to lose you.
P You're so much better [illegible] company than other girls.
O We promised old Dad not to debase the family name.
E But this is not like those others. He is a man of learning.
O No family, no money. That ain t learning.

(Scene with Appleyard & warden)

W Let's not dicker! Would you rather be a husk with musk or a rind with a mind?

W Your delight was in ~~xxxxx~~ youngg delights; my business is in handling the likes of you. Therefore each of us is going about his business.

A Surely there can be some happier accomodation.

W I am satisfied at any outcome which I surpervise according to the proper canons. The best outcome is for you to understand, and recognize the jurisdiction of, ~~xxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the result.

(Scene with Ellie-- beginning.)

(IT IS HER CHILD-VINDICTIVENESS & HER BROTHERS' WANT OF HER.)

(He gets orange juice-- containing prob. a potion?-- bought by a special fund. She gets some other drink, perhaps a scotch and soda.) But they get switched around.)

... cook up a storm of enthusiasm moist and yearnings tactile? No-- this brings a random tear to the eye, and frets up such need as the taker has waiting in him. It brings homesickness to the traveler, despair to the student, uncertainty to the monarch, and cynicism to the lover.

Appleyard, in his cage under a canary-cover, overhears talk of a potion.
Then, left alone with her, glasses are switched; she gets his orange juice, he her Scotch.
The talk of the potion was ambiguous-- he thinks it was for her, wants to get it himself so he'll love her and maybe get courage to come around and sell her into marrying him.
So he switches glasses. But we can't tell from that who got it.
A key is on the table by which she can open the cage, let him down and to her.
She does not, or something. Maybe the key doesn't work. And why was it left? I want the chief torturer to come to center stage at some point-- but why is he thus motivated? Professionalism?

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CHIEF IS SMART & ACCOMODATING; Brothers wanted to cook Appleyard's goose, but somebody else-- who? made the decision.

(TRIAL)

A You are but accessories to our great story, with no intrinsic interest.

H Okay, lady, it's up to you.
(She is infected with joy.)

O We got him then?
W Take him and do it. Quietly, please.

A I'm so disappointed. Please, Ellie, at least bless my researches? Then goodbye.

(They lead him away. His walk is scrawny from the cage, but not slow or shuffling. She watches them go, then sinks and xxxx weeps.)

'Cock Robin' STUFF